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**A SHORT COMMUNICATION****The origin of medical anthropometry 2000 years BC : The unrecognized Indian  
Contribution of Finger Width technique from Charak Sanhita***Vijay Kumar Rai<sup>1</sup> & Shalini Rai<sup>2</sup>*

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**Email Id:** [serviceheb@gmail.com](mailto:serviceheb@gmail.com)**Abstract:**

**Introduction/(Background):** The origin of medical anthropometry is attributed to Johann Sigismund Elsholtz dating back to 17<sup>th</sup> century, describing the relationship between human body and disease. The usage of this technique is also credited to the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans for measuring the human body, with the help of length of their feet or the width of their hand. The Indian contribution to Medical anthropometry is yet not unrecognized. This short review documents the technique of ancient Indian medical anthropometry using finger width (FW) technique documented in ancient Indian treatise of Charak Samhita.

**Material and Methods:** The contribution of CHARAK SAMHITA in the field of medical Anthropometry, searched form classical text was described in the form of short communication.

**Results:** The anthropometry technique described by Charak 2000 years before Christ used measurement techniques using individuals one's own *Anguli Pramana* [finger width] to determine the longevity, health, strength, nourishment etc. of the individual. Measurements equal to or close to the described parameters indicated excellence; while mild and severe derangements (decreased or increased) from indicated measurements signified moderate and poor faculties of longevity, strength, nourishment, etc. respectively.

**Discussion:** The ancient Indian anthropometrical determination technique using finger width method was grossly simple and highly individualized as well as generalized at the same time, as it effectively incorporated into assessment the issues of different body frames (lean, medium and heavy), ages (pediatric to adult), sex differences (male or female), heights (from dwarfs to gigantism) ethnicity etc. to predict normalcy or abnormality.

**Conclusion:** Indian contribution to the medical anthropometry has clearly remained unrecognized. The technique documented in Charaka Samhita using finger width techniques was simple, gross and yet precise, individualized as well as generalized and deserves its due credit in Medical history of the world.

**Keywords:** Anthropometry, Charak Samhita, finger width, Indian, medical history

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